

**seasons came,
changed the time**

jackpack

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Summary:

“This is a good one.” One of the other reasons Richie liked Bev is because she had a heart- at least, as much of a heart as you can have and do what they do. “You’ll probably be able to take some time off, after. Big payout.”

“Lay it on me.”

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Author's Note:

i swear to you this isn't a barry au because i don't know shit about barry, but i DID see a gif of mr. hader in it and go "ah. hitman au" so. take this. title taken from Bang Bang (My Baby Shot Me Down) because i'm like this.

the rating may or may not Climb after this we'll see my fingers are wild horses they go where they please and i simply follow.

as always, thank you to migz (@eddiekissbrak) for cheerleading. ur a doll and a gift, migzy.

Richie hadn't even been home for an hour when he got the call.

He almost ignored it; he was *bone* fucking tired, and he'd just gotten out of the shower and washed the blood off his hands. He deserved a rest.

But. It was his work phone, and he couldn't not answer his work phone.

He at least let it ring four times, narrowly avoiding sending whoever the fuck it was to voicemail. "Hello?"

"Looking for work?"

Despite himself, Richie almost smiled. "Hey there to you too, Bev."

"Hey there," There's a little bit of amusement in Beverly's voice; she was one of the only people from work- 'from work', like he worked in a fucking *office* - that was funny, that Richie didn't want to strangle on a regular basis. Bev still had a sense of humor. "You looking for work?"

"I just *finished* work." Richie heaved a sigh, tossing his towel into the laundry pile and settling for sitting bare assed on his bed.

Bev hummed. "So, yes?"

God. Richie hated his fucking job. "Yes," he said through gritted teeth. "Yes, I am."

"This is a good one." One of the other reasons Richie liked Bev is because she had a heart- at least, as much of a heart as you can have and do what they do. "You'll probably be able to take some time off, after. Big payout."

"Lay it on me." He fell backwards onto the bed and closed his eyes as she started to speak again, pinching the bridge of his nose.

"Government guy, sort of," Bev said, and before Richie could protest that he 'didn't fucking do assassinations, Beverly, you *know* that', she went on. "On contract- he's a private citizen; you know I wouldn't hand you any other kind of shit. His company's just doing some work

for the government, and there's someone pretty high up that doesn't like what he's finding."

"What is he?" Richie snorted, eyes cracking up to stare at his popcorn ceiling. "Journalist, mercenary?"

"Risk analyst," Bev answered, and when Richie didn't respond, she went on: "Crunching the numbers on some big government project and what might go wrong; he's got access to a lot of sensitive information, and he seems to be onto something that's gonna... upset some balance, or whatever. You know I don't ask questions when this shit gets handed down to me."

"And I ask even fewer," Richie hummed. He was silent for a few moments before he let his eyes slip shut again. "Alright. I'll take it."

"Atta boy, Richie," Bev said, even though she didn't sound all that proud.

"You know I never say no to a pretty face, Bev," Richie said, and that got her to laugh.

"You'll say no to me, one day," she said, and *that* she sounded proud of. "I'll get you the information. Get ready for a real boring read, Rich."

"What, the fucking *risk analyst* isn't secretly debonaire?" Richie huffed. "Color me shocked. Honestly, he might fucking croak of

boredom before I get to him- or, like... gout or whatever, one of those old sitting-too-long diseases that kings used to get in the Dark Ages.”

“I’m not sure you’ll get your pay out if that happens, so maybe don’t hope too hard,” Bev said. “Check your inbox in an hour, and good luck.”

“Always a pleasure, Ms. Beverly,” Richie said, pulling out an awful British accent he hadn’t used in years and delighting in the giggle it got from her. He got the feeling, sometimes, that he and Beverly would be the best of friends, were they some other line of work- any other line of work.

Neither of them can afford friends, though, not even with Bev’s heart and Richie’s idiocy, so they keep it to this. Playfully professional. “Catch you on the flip side.”

The line went dead. Richie tossed his work phone across the room and didn’t bother to open his eyes and see where it landed.

He needed to get up and get dressed.

He laid there for another hour, naked and cold, until he figured that he’d given Bev enough time to send him over the information he needed. He probably should’ve asked for more details; what the assignment would be, where it was, how long it was likely to take him to pull off- but, in the end, did it really matter? The end result was the same.

One way or another, this guy was gonna end up dead, and Richie would end up home alone, again, shivering in his own shitty apartment.

He didn't think he deserved too much room to pity himself, but- *fuck*, what a sad life he was living, huh?

Maybe he'd take Bev's advice, after all this, and take a vacation; go be sad on a beach somewhere with a fake passport and enough money to get wasted enough not to care whether he was alone, or bedding some sunburnt stranger that he would tell a *different* fake name than the one on his passport, and wouldn't see again for the rest of their natural lives.

But he'd heard that suggestion from Bev a billion times, and he still hadn't followed through, so it would more likely just be more of the same.

He left his work phone where it was laying on the ground, and instead went to go dig through his duffel bag for his laptop. It was a beat up old thing, and probably on the verge of death at any moment, but it was as secure as one of the tech guys Bev knew could get it, and it was the only way Richie could really pick up jobs, so he dealt with it.

The file took forever to download, and Richie groaned aloud to no one when he saw how many pages were in it; whoever had contracted this hit, they'd been doing their research long before Richie had- or, maybe, this guy was just that predictable.

Monday-Friday: Leaves home at four in the morning. Arrives at the gym, on foot, by four thirty. Leaves the gym at six thirty, arrives at work at seven. Leaves work for lunch at noon, returns at one. Works from one until seven, returns to the gym at seven thirty, leaves the gym at nine pm. Returns home at ten pm.

Saturday-Sunday: Goes to the gym at four in the morning. Runs various errands from nine am until seven, returns home at seven pm.

The guy seemed to stay out of the house a lot, which could either be a good thing, or a bad one; he was consistent, which meant he was easy to track down, but depending on who he had around, that could make him easy to miss. Not that it would matter if anyone missed him, after Richie was done. Police looking was inconvenient, sure, but Richie knew pretty damn well how to make a body disappear if that was going to be an issue, or make it look like something much more mundane if he was feeling lazy.

Richie didn't tend to read the rest of these things; they were often bogged down with personal details that he didn't need to know to get the job done. Names of wives, names of kids, parents, brothers, sisters, things that would make Richie's head hurt and his heart ache if he thought about them for too long. Tonight, though- he wasn't sure what was so different about this guy, but he let his eyes wander over the rest of the document. He could at least, if nothing else, see what the poor sucker looked like.

"The poor sucker" it turned out, looked... kinda *hot* . It had been awhile since Richie had been responsible for taking out such a rocking- twunk? Maybe, Richie wasn't up to date on this terminology. Anyway, it'd been a long time since Richie had done anything other

than take out a few old men, and maybe he *did* need to take some time off- or, at the very least, go get laid. The longer he looked at the few, somewhat grainy (because, despite this being the modern fucking era, pictures like this were somehow *always* still grainy) photos, the more he felt like a creep.

He drew the line at jerking it to surveillance photos of a soon to be dead man, though, so he scrolled past them, and let his eyes catch on the personal information section instead.

His heart stopped, when he read the name- even if it shouldn't, it really fucking shouldn't, because there was *no way* this was the same guy. The world was shitty, but there was no way in hell it would play a joke this cruel.

Edward Kaspbrak, forty. Current residence in New York City, former resident of Derry, Maine .

“Fuck,” Richie said aloud, stopping just short of throwing his laptop across the room. He knew the poor girl wouldn't survive the landing, not with as much thrumming energy as he'd put into it right now. “*Fuck* , what the fuck?”

Edward Kaspbrak. Derry.

Eddie - his Eddie. Or, never *his* Eddie, but that didn't quite matter. Richie hadn't thought about Derry in years; hadn't *let* himself think about Derry in years, but Eddie had always just been one step removed, ever present in the back of his mind.

And now, here he was, forced back to the forefront in the worst way Richie wouldn't have even dared to imagine.

He could still call Bev, maybe. Say that he couldn't take this one; she wouldn't ask too many questions, probably, and would just hand it off to someone else down the line. He could run, and keep running, go work at a fucking PacSun or something and neve, ever, ever hear the name Eddie Kaspbrak again, and maybe learn to forget it one day.

As fucking if .

Richie had forgotten, in the split second where he was remembering being a scared little kid, that he *wasn't* a scared little kid anymore. He didn't live in Derry, and he wasn't running from bullies or hiding out in the alley behind the drug store; he'd killed more people than he'd like to think about on any given day. People with families, lives, prominent careers, people who'd miss them lining the streets.

What made Edward Kaspbrak so different?

As fucking if Richie didn't know the answer to that already.

He didn't call Bev to turn it down. He closed his laptop, put it aside, and only gave himself a moment to sit on the edge of his bed before he pushed himself to his feet. He hadn't had time to unpack his bag, yet, which was good; it meant that he could leave in the morning.

It was six hour flight from LA to New York.

Lots of time to think.

Richie hoped he just passed out instead.

He dreamed- both that night, and on the flight over. Richie had really thought he had scrubbed every trace of Derry from his bones the day he left, but apparently, six feet wasn't nearly deep enough to bury that particular chapter of his life. He dreamt of Eddie; not any particular memory, but flashes of many, warm feelings eventually cut through with the cold, creeping knowledge that he'd probably never feel like that again, and it was going to be all his fault.

Or. Mostly his fault.

He woke up as the plane landed in a cold sweat and, to a look of sympathy from the kind, older woman sitting next to him. "Scared of flying?"

"Scared of landing, mostly," Richie said, giving her a thin smile and a nod.

"Don't worry about it, dear," the woman said, patting his hand where it gripping the arm rest. "Coming down's scary, but being there's the best part."

Richie just hummed and nodded. Who gave random ladies at JFK the right to be so goddamn profound?

He'd forgotten what a hellscape JFK was; it had been a long time since he'd been there. Getting an Uber into the city wasn't much better, and by the time Richie reached New York proper, he had a fucking *pounding* headache. He was relieved when the car pulled up to the shitty little apartment building Bev had found for him to stay at; she- *they* , whoever the *they* he and Bev worked for; Richie knew better to ask- kept apartments all over the country, and a few internationally. It was easier that way; no individual paper trails, and they were usually in places where people *also* knew better than to ask questions about a new tenant appearing and disappearing every few months.

The apartment was empty, when Richie came in, stripped down to the bare essentials. A bed, a couch, a clean kitchen, and toilet paper in the bathroom- the only thing that proved to him that anyone had ever been here before him. It was always like this; when Richie left in however many days, he'd leave it the same as he left it, wiping down every possible surface he could've touched and leaving without a trace.

Whenever he's done- died of old age on a beach somewhere, or killed in the line of duty- Richie was pretty sure there wouldn't be a trace of him left anywhere but his old high school yearbooks. The world was never going to know Richie Tozier was in it.

The apartment had one advantage, though; it was the exact midpoint between Eddie- between *Kaspbrak*, *Kaspbrak*, *not Eddie*; he wasn't Eddie anymore, couldn't be- Kaspbrak's apartment, and the gym

where he seemed to spend most of his time. It meant that, wherever Richie was going to be doing the deed, he had a starting point to pick up a tail.

Richie didn't have too much to do, today, other than set up, so he gave himself a single allowance to sit on the couch and do fucking nothing, for once.

Except, "nothing" turned into thinking about Eddie Kaspbrak.

It'd been- fucking *years* since Richie had seen him, or heard from him; they'd fallen out of touch like old friends do, except it had been *entirely* Richie's fault that they had. Eddie's written, called a few times, and Richie- chicken shit as he was, and bitter that all of his friends seemed to be having better lives, better times- hadn't answered.

He'd let Eddie go.

Let *everyone* go, but. Eddie had never been a part of "everyone."

Thinking about Eddie sucked. Richie set an alarm, closed his eyes, and hoped to god he wouldn't dream about Eddie again, too.

Obviously, his hoping didn't work.

It was the same as before, flashing memories and feelings, twisting

and turning from warm to chilling. By the time Richie's alarm went off, he had to rush to the bathroom to throw up, and then back to his bag to get his binoculars out in time.

It was nine twenty nine on the dot when he seated himself at the window, seconds ticking by like hours. If he knew Eddie- *Kaspbrak* , if he still knew him in any way, he knew he was punctual. If you told him that something was going to happen at two, he'd be there at two, on the dot, it not early.

Fifty eight, fifty nine, sixty.

On the dot, a head of dark hair came through Richie's sights, gym bag slung over one shoulder and messenger bag slung over the other.

It was from at least a hundred feet away, but- god. Richie never thought that seeing Kaspbrak again would knock the breath out of him like this.

It was a bad time to take the hit, thank god; Richie wasn't a crack shot from a distance, and there were too many people around, and he wasn't sure if he would've been able to make himself pull the trigger even if he'd wanted to.

God. Eddie looked *exhausted* - but, a work day, and four hours in the gym. That was to be expected.

Richie followed Eddie with his gaze until he disappeared around a

corner, and then he let his binoculars drop to the ground so he could still his shaking hands. *Fuck*. Fuck, this was going to be- a rough one, if this was how it was going to be at *every* point of the process. *Stop being fucking stupid, Richie* ; it wasn't like he and Eddie were friends anymore, were *anything at all* . Richie had fucked that right up, and now, here they were.

Kaspbrak was a hit. There was a client waiting on the other end, with a massive payout, and a future version of Richie on a beach, drunk on mid shelf tequila and fucking a dark haired, hard bodied man that'll look too much like Kaspbrak for Richie to *really* forget what he'd just done. But, that wasn't any different than the usual; Richie was pretty sure his heart was too soft for this line of business, but he was also pretty sure it was the only thing he was good at, at this point. Too late for a fresh start.

The sooner he got this job done, the better.

There wasn't much else for Richie to do that night, so he went out to pick up some takeout and some booze, and decided he was gonna just drink himself to a dreamless sleep. Kaspbrak went to the gym at the ungodly hours of four in the morning, every single day, and if Richie was going to do this, it would be best to catch him sometime before going to work, so, he was going to be waking up at an ungodly hour, too.

Fuck Eddie, and fuck his habit of always getting up early. He'd been like this as a kid, too, always pestering Richie when he slept past ten on weekends, antsy and ready to get to the day's activities, and-

Richie needed to stop thinking about this. He set an alarm, and started drinking straight from the bottle.

This beach better be well fucking worth it.

Author's Note:

hit me up on tumblr @neiboltwell to tell me to write the second chapter of this!!!! or just yell at me in general, thank you.